

A Brief
EXHORTATION

To all who profess the Truth,

*To come clear out of Babylon, and not to joyn with any hurtful
 or unseemly Practice, nor make Marriages with Unbelievers,
 but be a seperate People from every Unclean thing, that
 God may receive you.*

My Dear and Well Beloved Friends,

F.L. 944th Vol II

THere is, and hath been a long time, a great Travail
 and Exercise upon me for the Prosperity of *Sion*,
 and the Tranquility of New and Heavenly *Jeru-*
salem, that she may be the Praise of the whole Earth, and
 that her spiritual Government may spread over Nations,
 Kindreds, Tongues and People, where the Whorish Spi-
 rit hath sate, which hath led People from God into *Babylon*,
 which is Confusion and Disorder. Oh, what shall I say!
 my Soul and Spirit is grieved and pained within me, when
 I take a view of the Numberless Number of hurtful things
 that this Spirit hath led People into; But that which on
 the other hand is comfort unto me, is, That the Lord our
 God, in his unutterable Loving Kindness, hath made hear
 his holy Arm, and caused his glorious Light to shine in
 the hearts of many Thousands, which hath discovered
Mystery Babylon, (the Mother of Harlots and all Abomina-
 tions) in a great measure, praises be to his great Name for-
 ever, *Amen*.

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Dear Friends, That which ought to be all our Concerns, to whom the Lord hath so largely appeared, as to make us a kind of first Fruits to himself in this latter Age, is, to see that we come clear out of *Babylon*, that we be not Partakers with her in any of her hurtful things, which have been brought in in the Midnight of Darknes and Popery: The Cry is now, which *John* heard many Years ago, *Come out of her my People, partake not of her sins, lest ye also partake of her Plagues, for strong is the Lord that judgeth her.* Now dear Friends, her Worship in all her finest Dresses and Names, (under what Profession soever) you that are come (almost, in the least measure) to believe in the blessed Light, I doubt not but you see over it, and cannot joyn with them in it; yet bear with me a little, there may be some things that some may stick in, or not so clearly see over, as they should or might do if they well minded the Light. We read of some of old that had much good in them yet was short in some things; some in all Ages saw before others in some things for a time; but those which were truly faithful to what they did know, not regarding the friendship of the World, nor yet their frowns in that case, had their understandings more and more opened, and were made instrumental to convince and to strengthen and confirm others. So, all dear Friends, dwell in the Light that you may clearly see every little thing that is to be denyed, and the tendency of every Spirit, Practice or Custom that may be hurtful either in our day, or to succeeding Generations: Christ told his Disciples, *that they were as a City set upon a Hill which could not be hid, and the Salt of the Earth:* The Salt is to season that which otherwise would be unfavoury. Oh! the Lord help all his People well and truly to consider this weighty thing, in all our commerce with all sorts of People, that Gods pure witness may be reached, and

and every appearance of Evil born Testimony against; for the Lord is about to make a clear separation, he will not bear much longer, as he hath done in the time of Ignorance. Therefore let us all see that we do not uphold or countenance any vain Custom or Practice that hath been brought up in the dark Night of Apostacy, or that may be of an evil tendency, but rather let us dwell alone in those things: What if we be not reckoned among the Nations, as it was prophesied of old? and the Prophet *Isaiah* said (speaking of the Gospel times) *Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out, touch no unclean thing, be ye Clean, that bear the Vessels of the Lord, Isa. 52.* And the Apostle said, *Be ye separated, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean Thing, and I will receive you, and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my Sons and Daughters, saith the Lord God Almighty:* These are precious Promises: What if we be slighted by the World, because we cannot joyn with them in any excess of Riot or evil Custom? The Apostle said, *The Friendship of this World is Enmity with God;* and hath not God put Enmity between the two Seeds? how then can they have affinity together? (though there may be commerce in things civil) Let this be well minded in all our Marriages; the Apostle said, *Be not unequally yoked together with Unbelievers, for what fellowship hath Righteousness with Unrighteousness? and what communion hath Light with Darkness? or what Concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an Infidel?* *Joshua* said to *Israel* of old, *If ye do in any wise go back and cleave unto the Remnant of these Nations, and shall make Marriages with them, they shall be Snares and Traps unto you, and Scourges in your sides, and Thorns in your Eyes, until you perish from off the good Land:* And did not this come to pass? and had not we need to have great care in this matter? Truly I see rather more need here than we

had in our Native Land ; for many come to our Meetings, and will get a Friend by the hand, that know little of Truth in their hearts. Therefore it concerns our Monthly Meetings to inspect well into this matter, that we may not become a mixt People, lest the Lord be angry and spue us out ; but I hope better of most. *Abraham* commanded his Servant, *That he should not take a Wife for his Son Isaac of the Daughters of the Canaanites, but of his Kindred*, and the like charge *Isaac* gave to *Jacob* ; but afterward Marriages with outward Kindred was forbidden, and they were to marry with them of the same Society, or with such as kept the Ordinances of God ; and doth not our Society stand in that which is heavenly and spiritual, which may be call'd a spiritual Kindred, with whom we may in the fear of God joyn in Marriage. *Marriage is honourable in all, where the Bed is undefiled, but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* And if any unclean or hasty Marriage happen, when a man or woman doth not stay a convenient time after the decease of the Husband or Wife, Friends should show their dislike, and not countenance them at all, that we may be Witnesses for our God against all Unrighteousness both of Flesh and Spirit : *Know ye not that the Saints shall judge the World*, but if we joyn with any uncomly Action, they will judge us. And take heed of too much observing that Custom of making great Feasts at Weddings, or of joyning with the World therein, but let all wait to be guided in Gods Wisdom, that so all things may be done to his honour ; for Marriage is a weighty thing, and ought to be solemnly performed in the fear of God, and not in Revelling and Lightness, as many of the World have done, using those immodest Actions of taking the Brides Garters and Shoe-strings, and shewing of folly in getting them to Bed. Oh ! let not these things, or any other unseemly Action or Word

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be once mentioned amongst any that profess the Truth of God; and let all Friends take heed of making, or joyning with them that do make appointed Feasts some small time after a Child is born; for I, with many of the Lords People have seen much evil therein, and been constrained to bear our Testimony against it; yet let all beware of Covetousness in that and all other things, providing things honest in the sight of all men. The Apostle Paul said, *Whatsoever things are true, just, honest, pure, lovely, and of good report; if there be any Virtue, think on these things.* Friends, these things should be minded in our Marriages, Births and Burials, that all may be in a comly sollid order, out of all Extreames, and so we shall overcome evil with good, and leave a good pattern to our Posterity.

There is one thing more, which for the sake of our Youth, and some others, I cannot well omit, without giving a hint of it, and that is about observing the time call'd *Christmaß*, which the false Christians set up, as they did many other days, call'd, *Saints dayes*, which the Lord hath laid a holy constraint upon his People to bear their Testimony against, tho' some have not been so clear as they should have been therein. Now Friends, this is that which God by his Light and Spirit hath opened in my Heart many years ago, That when they had in a great measure lost the Saints Life and Christs Day within them, then in the darkness they set up Saints Days and Christ's Day (as they call it) without them, about which time there is more Wickedness acted than at other times: I could say much about that, and many other things which have been set up in the Night of Darkness; but these things were of weight upon me, and this is the sence which God hath given me, That none who profess the Truth should make any shew of observing these Times, either in Apparel or Provision,

or going a visiting, or neglecting their usual Business because its that time. But some may object, and say, *We have known some Friends appoint Meetings on that day, and about that time.* I *Answ.* True, but for what end? has it been to observe the Time? No such matter, but to catch People when they were idle, and to labour to bring them from the observation of days without in Vanity, & to bring them to the Day of Christ within, that they might walk in the Light of it, and be saved from their sins.

Dear Friends, These things are written in the true Love of God, and without Reflection upon any particular, but for easing my self of what for some time hath lain upon me. It was my design at first writing that it should be read in Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, but that I shall leave to the judgment of Friends to do as they see meet: I hope it will not be hurtful in any Meetings.

Written the 25th of the 1st Moneth, 1691. By your Travailing Brother, John Wilsford.

P O S T S C R I P T.

There is another thing comes afresh upon me, which I cannot well omit, which is this, It seemeth an uncomly thing, and sheweth too little love to the former Wife or Husband for either Man or Woman to be concern'd or keep company with any in the way of Marriage too soon after the former Wife or Husband be dead, tho' they may stay a year before they Marry, yet if they keep company, or be too soon concerned on the account of Marriage, it is not of good favour; and all who profess the Truth of God should be good Examples to them that are without, that they seeing our sober sollid godly conversation, coupled with fear, may have cause to glorifie God on our behalf, in the day of their Visitation.

J. W.

A short Testimony for the good Order of Truth, as it is established and practised amongst the People, called, Quakers, shewing how by degrees the Lord in his love led us into it: Written partly for the opening the Understanding of the weak and honest hearted, and for convincing of Opposers and Gain-sayers.

Dear Friends and People;

When first the Lord Almighty cast his Eye of Pity towards us, we were a poor People, scattered upon the barren Mountains and parched Hearths, where some of us wandered from Mountain to Hill, from one Profession to another, seeking the living amongst the dead, but found him not there, for he was risen; and our Rest that we had, some in one Profession, and some in another, was polluted, and we were troubled, being as Sheep without a Shepherd, and then we cryed unto the Lord, and sought secret places to pour out our souls before him, as well as we could, crying for the holy guidings of his pure Spirit; for we were at a loss, and knew no bottom to stand upon. Then in this day of Distress, (which was more than my Tongue can declare) did the Lord in his unutterable loving-kindness open his way unto us, and shewed us that we should wait in his Light and Spirit within us, *for that which was to be known of God, was manifest within;* and then we durst not give our own meanings to the Scriptures or other Writings of holy men, but came to know a time of true silence, for which my Soul hath great cause to praise the Lord; for the Lord shewed me and many more that we must wait upon him out of our own Thoughts, Imaginations or Conceivings, and then was Judgment laid to

the Line, and Righteousness to the Plummets, and our sins were set in order before us, and there was no help nor strength left in us, of our selves we could do nothing, but lie down under the Judgments of the Lord, and abide the day of his coming, until Judgment was brought forth unto Victory, and the Lord was pleased to reveal his own Righteousness, and overshadow us with his Loving-kindness, and cause us to drink of the still Waters of *Shilo*, which caused our hearts to be glad, being overcome with his love, and then we said, O Lord! shew us more and more what thou wouldst have us to do; for thou hast won our hearts, and overcome our Souls, and we are given up to do thy Will, whatever it cost us. And as we continued waiting upon him in his Light and Spirit, our Understandings were more and more opened, and our number encreased; The Net was cast into the Sea, and gathered of every kind; for the Lord made Fishers of men; and then he shewed us that there was need of Discipline and Order amongst us touching Marriage, and many other things, and that if any offended, they might be dealt with, as Christ taught in the 18th chap. of *Matthew*, and as *Paul* said, *warn them that are unruly*, and further, *We command you, Brethren, withdraw your selves from every Brother that walketh Disorderly*; yet it was the mind of Christ, and the Apostle, that if a man was overtaken with a fault, those that were spiritual should labour to restore him in the Spirit of Meekness; and that those that oppose themselves should be instructed, that if God peradventure would give them Repentance, to the acknowledging the Truth. And as we continued waiting upon the Lord, he led us by degrees, according to our measures, into this way and method; and we have laboured to instruct, advise and counsel one another; and though there be diversities of Gifts and Operations, yet its by the same

same Spirit that worketh all in all, to the edifying of the Body, of which Christ is the Head; to the end there be no Schism, but true Unity and Harmony amongst the Members; for indeed one Member cannot suffer alone, it is the nature of the Body, if any Member be out of joynt, to endeavour to bring it in again; but if it cannot be gotten in, but becomes putrified, and in danger of hurting or spoiling the whole Body, the skilful Chyrurgeon will advise to cut it off, rather than the whole Body should perish, tho' this is not delightful to the true Body, but sorrow and pain to lose a Member, and its seldom done untill all the Friends of the Monethly or Quarterly Meeting whereto such an Offender belongs, be clear of him; for its the labour, care and desire of Friends, that if any professing Truth, should be overtaken with a fault, by which Truth may suffer, that they may see it, and repent, and clear Truth themselves. And let not any think it to be a light thing to be so stubborn and rebellious, as to cause the Body or Church of Christ to disown them, though the *Papists* have assumed to themselves, for filthy *Lucres* sake, that Power which God never gave them, yet there is much in Christs words, (who never spoke unadvisedly) where he saith speaking of Offenders) *If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a Heathen man, or a Publican; verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven: Again, I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on Earth touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* These are weighty Sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, and ought to be well considered on all hands. Was it ever known, that any
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Member prospered, being seperated from the living Body whereunto it did belong.

And as touching Marriage, it hath been Friends advice, and a necessity hath been seen for it, that all who profess the same Truth with us, should publish their Intentions of it, according to the Law of these Provinces; yet according to the sense and understanding that God by his Spirit hath given me, with many Brethren, all that profess the same Truth with us, ought first to publish it to Friends, as abovesaid, and have their advice and unity in their proceedings. And all that frequent our Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, should have in some measure the sense & concern of Truth upon them, and not come as evil Spies to wrest Friends words, and carry Tales about; if any do so, they are more like Enemies than Friends in that matter.

And all *dear Friends*, who have the Concerns of Truth and the care of the Church upon you, wait to feel the living Power of God in all your Gatherings, and the mind of the Spirit, that all things may be done in the Wisdom of God, which is from above, which is pure and peaceable, and easie to be entreated to every good thing. And all, both Male and Female, wait to know your several Services in the Church of Christ; for the Body is not one Member, but many, and the Eye cannot say to the Hand, I have no need of thee, nor the Head to the Feet, I have no need of thee; but every Member hath its proper Service; Though the Man is not without the Woman, nor the Woman without the Man in the Lord, yet they have their particular Service in the outward Family, so in the spiritual Family or Church of Christ; Let them that Read Understand; does not the good Woman take care that nothing be lacking in the Family? and are not the
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good Men one with them in it? Oh dearly Beloved Friends! my Soul loves you, and I desire that all may feel the Unity of the Spirit, which is the Bond of true and lasting Peace. The Devil is labouring to make Divisions all the World over, and can we expect to be free from his Temptations? Therefore we had need Watch and Pray that we may be delivered from Evil, that we all may be as lively Stones built up, a Spiritual House to offer Spiritual Sacrifices acceptable to God, by Jesus Christ, that we may shew forth the Praise of him who hath called us out of Darkness into his marvelous Light. Which is the earnest Desire and fervent Prayer of your Friend (who at the close of this Epistle is filled with the Love of God to all his Flock.)

*Written, the 4th of the 2d
Month, 1691.*

John Wilsford

Let one of these be kept in each Quarterly
Meeting-Book.

T H E E N D.

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